

CITY OF CAPE TOWN

20 MAY 2020

STATEMENT BY THE CITY'S MAYORAL COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT, ALDERMAN JAMES VOS

Economic Action Plan in place to get Cape Town up and running

Today, I had the opportunity to address the Cape Chamber of Commerce on the City's Economic Action Plan (EAP) which sets out our plans to respond to and work towards recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Since the launch of the EAP, we have secured some notable successes. Read more below:

The measures to contain the Coronavirus have had a disastrous impact on our economy. South Africa's economy is bleeding billions every day and millions of people will be added to the ranks of the unemployed.

The City of Cape Town's Enterprise and Investment Department is working hard to ensure that we not only minimise the effects of this crisis – but build a stronger, more resilient future for our businesses and ultimately the residents of Cape Town.

The City's Economic Action Plan identifies three stages of intervention in response to the crisis: respond, adapt and recover, and stabilise.

The focus in the first stage has been to RESPOND quickly and with focus. This has resulted in early successes.

The City assisted the BPO (call centres) sector to equip their staff to work from home. We also assisted qualifying businesses to gain essential service status so that they could operate during the lockdown.

The Mayor and I have on several occasions lobbied national government to amend certain restraining regulations. I am pleased that the sustained pressure from the City of Cape Town and many others resulted in the expansion of the list of essential items as well as unbanning the unfettered operation of the e-commerce sector to protect both lives and livelihoods.

We have helped companies to re-purpose towards the needs created by the crisis. Given that COVID-19 is a global crisis, many countries are looking to land urgent orders for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as well as critical medical supplies like ventilators. We have identified local companies that

can pivot their normal manufacturing to meet these health needs and to best position themselves to take advantage of this opportunity.

We have also Investigated and recommended possible relief measures, many of which have been implemented. The City's Finance Directorate has made relief measures available to guest houses and certain B&Bs and now allows them to apply to change their property classification due to the impact of COVID-19, which could cut rates bills in half.

The Invest Cape Town website is frequently updated with the latest and most accurate information available to give businesses access to vital information on ongoing interventions and assistance available from national, provincial and local government.

Facilitating Business 2 Business communications has kickstarted capacity to manufacture PPE and critical supplies including ventilators. This resulted in wins created through our key partnerships and has given us critical insight into sourcing and the supply of cloth masks with the Cape Clothing and Textile Cluster as well as the Craft and Design Institute.

The 'Women in Business programme' is another inspiring example of adapting to a new way of working by embracing technology. One of the City's Strategic Business Partners (SBPs), the Cape Innovation & Technology Initiative (CiTi) works with government, business and society to promote the inclusive growth of the digital economy.

The 'Women in Business programme,' which trains female entrepreneurs on the latest available technological resources to improve and grow their business, has now been adapted and is delivered exclusively online. Participants will also have access to additional online learning components.

I am also particularly proud of the SMME COVID-19 Toolkit initiative, which is available to SMMEs in Cape Town, and will, in the next couple of days provide thousands of toolkits containing the essentials to help get businesses back to work safely as soon as they are allowed to do so.

The City of Cape Town and our official Destination Marketing Organisation, Cape Town Tourism (CTT), have formulated plans, embraced technology and used research as a strategic guide, to plot a sustainable future for the City's vital and vibrant tourism sector. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail and I am proud of the work that has gone into helping the tourism industry on the road to readiness and recovery.

Our plan highlights the need to continually learn and engage with our network to identify the full and ongoing impact of the crisis – so that we can provide and facilitate the exact support needed.

As we enter a new level of lockdown, our focus now shifts to the next phase and to ensure business retention and even expansion, by taking advantage of the opportunities every crisis presents.

My team is currently investigating key aspects as a part of our recovery phase. These include enhancing business retention efforts, lowering the costs of doing business and transacting with the City to making it easier for expansion and investment to resume again, e-learning and driving ED-Tech.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated preventative measures have fundamentally changed the way we work. The City continues to work through our SBPs to look at equipping businesses with new ways of working.

In every crisis, there is an opportunity and the City is actively working to identify and exploit new sectoral opportunities that are emerging.

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